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TRANSFER TRANSITIONS

C. D. Fisher, C. Wilkins,
& J. Eulberg

February, 1982
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This report is a review and synthesis of the literature on job transfers. Transfers are job and location changes within the organization which necessitate both adjusting to/learning a new job for the employee, and adjusting to a new community for the family. Very little is known about either of these two processes. This report summarizes past research and suggests new hypotheses in the areas of employee and family adjustment to both domestic and foreign transfers.

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In another section, an organizational view of the costs and benefits of transfers is presented. The final section pinpoints the few "facts" we have discovered about transfer adjustment, and suggests major areas in need of additional research.

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Geographic mobility is a common experience in the United States. As of 1974, one out of five families changed residence at least once a year (Pospisil, 1974). Of these residence changes, about 800,000 involved transfers of corporate employees and their families to new locations both in the U.S. and abroad (Glueck, 1974). As inflation and poor economic conditions became more prevalent, companies still continued to relocate their employees despite the rising costs of relocation. Although company policies on paying moving costs vary greatly, the average cost for a domestic employee transfer was $30,000 in 1981 (Business Week, July 27, 1981) compared to $16,000 in 1978 and $7800 in 1973 (Collie and DiDomenico, 1980). Whereas most employee transfers are domestic or in the U.S., many multinational companies regularly transfer employees to foreign locations. In 1976, there were reportedly 40,000 American executives in temporary or permanent positions overseas (Baker, 1976). Moving an employee and his or her family to a foreign location can cost a company as much as $125,000 (Action, 1981).

While much of the relocation cost is due to inflation and real estate sales expenses, a substantial portion of the figure is attributable to companies "sweetening the pot" to attract employees to relocate, or to "keep them whole" when they do relocate under present economic conditions. Company relocation policies have changed since the 50's and 60's basic expense provisions (such as movement of household goods and transportation of the employee and family to the new work location). The 70's brought about company relocation policies which included real estate sales assistance programs, extra pay to cover federal tax liability on nondeductible moving expenses, mortgage interest differential programs, house hunting trips, temporary living accommodations, plus the more basic relocation expenses.

In addition to the monetary cost of transfer born by the organization, there is also an emotional cost to the employee and family. Leaving established friends and moving to a strange community is always at least temporarily stressful. More and more literature has been appearing recently to suggest that the stresses engendered by frequent uprooting due to transfer can be severe and long lasting in some cases (Seidenberg, 1973; Tiger, 1978; Vandevelde, 1979).

Thus, transfer would seem to be an important area for research. A phenomenon so costly should be better understood. Understanding may lead to methods of managing transfers so as to minimize both financial and emotional costs.

The topic of employee transfer has not been heavily researched, and much of the research that has been done is neither theoretically based nor of good quality. However, there are bodies of literature which may be applied to understand and explain the processes occurring in transfer. Specifically, the literature on organizational socialization is helpful. By far the bulk of this literature deals with the adjustment of new employees to their first job in the organization. Surely there is much to be learned by a raw recruit which is already known by a transferee, such as the organization's goals, climate, values, practices, structure, and so on. However, transferees usually do need to learn a new job, develop relationships with new peers and a new superior, and perhaps adjust to site-specific variations on the organization's values, practices, and the like. Thus, the literature on organizational socialization may help in understanding the adjustment of the relocated employee to his or her job. However, this is only one major adjustment task of transferees.

Brett and Werbel (1980) have identified many additional adjustment areas for transferred families, which fall into the categories of housing, social, community, and children. There is less relevant research available in these areas, though some correlates of "successful" family adjustment to relocation have been identified. The remainder of this paper will examine first types of transfers, then the impact of transfer on the organization, the employee, and the employee's family.

Typology of Transfers

In our discussion thus far, "transfer" has been treated as a single, undifferentiated construct. In fact, transfers can vary quite a bit on a number of dimensions. In this section, these dimensions will be identified and their probable importance discussed.

Schein's (1971) cone model of the organization provides a useful starting point from which to understand the movement from one job to another. His basic model appears in Figure 1. This model identifies three types of boundary transitions which individuals can make in an organization. First, individuals can move across boundaries vertically, via promotion or demotion, to jobs at different points in the organizational hierarchy. Second, individuals can move laterally through boundaries on the circumference of the cone, from one functional area to another. Third, individuals can move radially -- in towards the center of the cone, toward greater inclusion, influence, or centrality, or out toward the edge, symbolizing less inclusion. This dimension is usually quite informal and ordinarily would not be considered a job change.

All these types of moves could happen within a single work site, and thus would not be considered transfers. "Transfer" historically has meant a change in work site which requires a relocation of domicile. Transfers may be accompanied by vertical and/or circumferal movement on the cone, or may consist of continuing to perform the exact same job in new geographic location. Radial movement almost inevitably accompanies any transfer or job change, with the newcomer being an "outsider" and having to gradually "earn" centrality in the new work group.

Schein's model adequately describes job change in a single plant, or a small organization with only one location. However, for the purpose of visually representing transfers, his model is incomplete. An organization with multiple locations might lo more like Figure 2, with each location

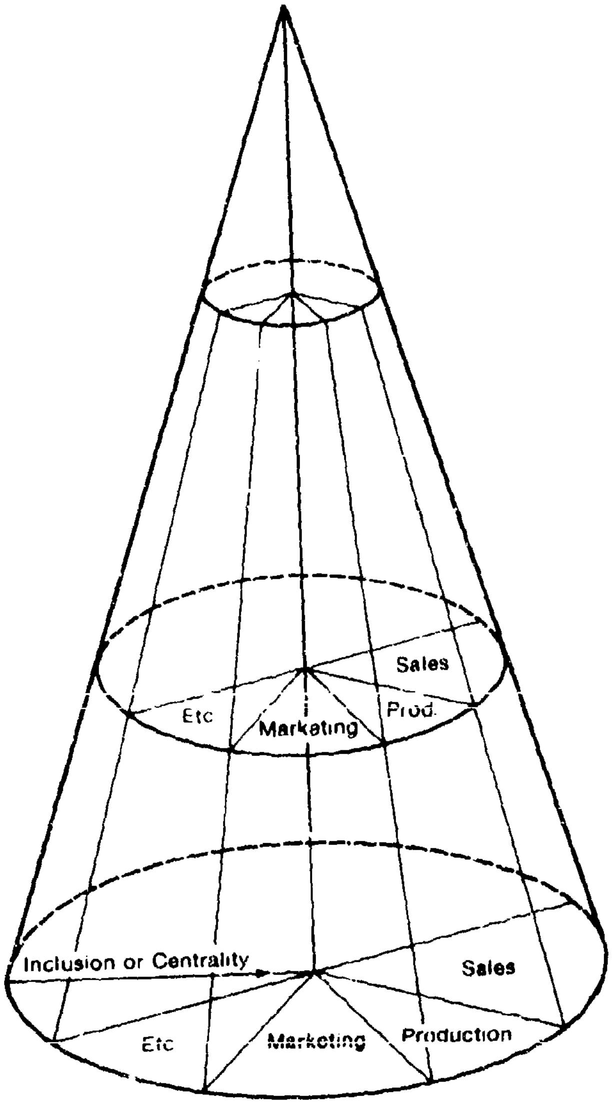
Sales
Etc
Marketing
Prod.
Inclusion or Centrality
Sales
Etc
Marketing
Production

Figure 1
Schein's Cone Model of Organizations

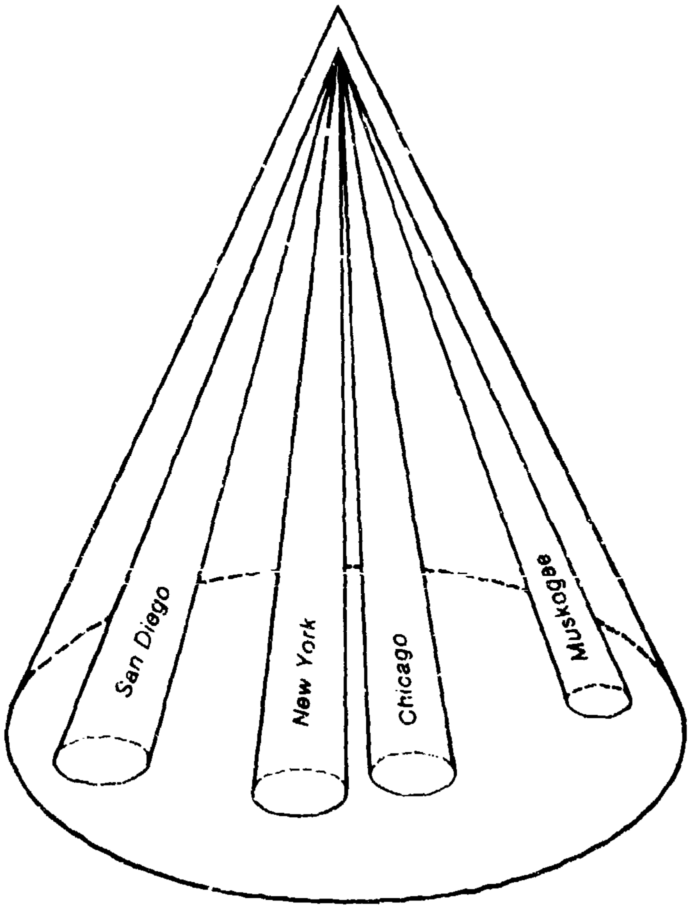
San Diego
New York
Chicago
Muskogee

Figure 2
Cone Model for Multi-location Organization

sharing in the organization's macro-goals and top leadership, but with potentially significant differences among locations in terms of work climate, leadership, procedures, products, and goals. In addition, when various sites are located in different cities, there may be geographic, cultural, and community differences for employees and their families to cope with.

For multinational organizations, further additions to the model are necessary (see Figure 3). Foreign locations are likely to be markedly different in work-related ways, due to the need for working with host country employees, suppliers, and clients, and operating under different legal and cultural assumptions. Environmental factors relevant to family life will also be very different relative to domestic locations. Thus, a "cultural boundary" must also be crossed in many foreign transfers. Further discussion of foreign transfer will occur later.

The dimensions identified thus far which are relevant for describing variations in transfers are:

1. hierarchical change (up, down, no change)
2. functional change (no change, change)
3. geographic/site change (different city, different region, different country)

It seems reasonable to assume that the greater the change within any one dimension, the more adjustment and resocialization will be required. Considering hierarchical change, vertical movement requires the learning of a new job, with different (usually higher) levels of responsibility. Some vertical shifts may require more adjustment than others -- moving from a non-supervisory to a supervisory position probably requires more changes in behavior and orientation than moving between adjacent levels within management. Functional changes may also vary in degree. For instance, moving from staff to line management may be a greater shift than movement within either area.

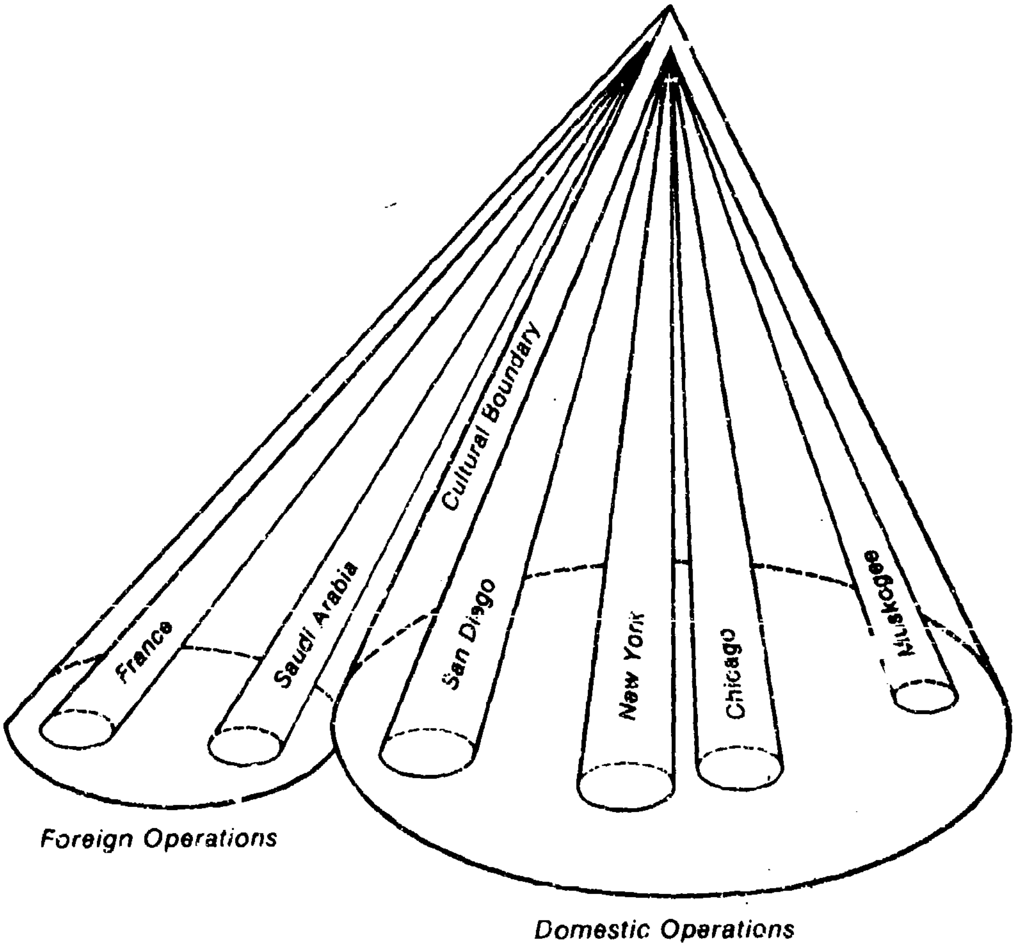
Cultural Boundary
France
Saudi Arabia
San Diego
New York
Chicago
Muskogee
Foreign Operations
Domestic Operations

Figure 3
Cone Model for Multi-national Organization

These changes in job responsibility or content affect the employee more directly than his or her family. Geographic change will have the greatest impact on the family, or on social life in the case of the single employee. Geographic changes can be relatively minor, between similar cities within the same state or region, or more major, between very different cities in different states or regions, or still more dramatic, between countries.

Taking all dimensions together, a reasonable hypothesis would be that the more boundaries crossed, and the greater the magnitude of each crossing in a transfer, the larger the adjustment task faced by an employee and his or her family, and the greater the potential for adjustment problems to occur. This idea is consistent with the work of Louis (1980) or career transitions. She states that "The more elements that are different in the new role or situation, and the more they are different from previous roles, the more the transitioner potentially has to cope with" (Louis, 1980, p.331). She goes on to point out that it is perceived, subjective differences between one situation and another (which she labels "contrast") rather than objective change, which most directly affects adjustment to a new role. However, greater objective change would usually be associated with more perceived change and contrast.

A fourth dimension of transfer is also worthy of discussion. This is the extent to which significant others accompany the transferee on the move, and provide social support during readjustment. Two main classes of others are the family and the work group. The most typical case is for the head of the household to be transferred to a new job, accompanied by the family but not by any colleagues from the old work site. However, other types of transfer do occur. In some cases, the family may refuse to move with the employee, or may be delayed several months while waiting to sell the old house, or for a child to finish the school year. In the military, six month or longer "unaccompanied tours" are not uncommon. This results in a transfer experience for the employee in which social support during his or her adjustment to the new job is reduced, while worries about the well-being of the absent family are increased. Quite a lot of research has been done on the effects of long separation from the family due to job demands. This research will be discussed further in a later section of this paper.

In industry, a less common phenomenon is to transfer several employees from one site to another at the same time. This would usually only happen if an existing site was being closed, or a brand new one staffed. However, in the military, unit transfers are quite common. As early as 1955, Chesler, Van Steenburg, and Bruckel reported experiments with transferring combat replacements by platoon rather than as individuals. More recently, the Marines have switched to transferring intact battalions for six month overseas tours, as an alternative to the largely individual rotation system they previously had in place. Being transferred with one's "buddies" should facilitate individual adjustment, and may reduce the tension and apprehension often associated with transfers (Grinken and Spiegel, 1945; Schacter, 1959).

Summing up, transfers can be categorized by hierarchical job change, functional job change, geographic change, and social change, with the latter being at a minimum if both one's family and one's work group transfer together, and at a maximum if the employee moves without either family or work group.

Transfers: An Organizational Viewpoint

Why Transfer?

Several authors have recently expounded upon the reasons that organizations choose to transfer some of their employees. The "obvious" reasons for transfers according to Pinder and Das (1979) and Pinder (1981) are to meet staffing needs in the organization, and to train employees (particularly managers) by exposing them to different jobs at various locations in the organization. These are legitimate reasons for both domestic and foreign transfers. The operation of both reasons are particularly clear in the case of foreign transfers -- expatriate use is greatest in under-developed countries where technical and managerial staffing needs are most difficult to meet with host-country nationals. On the other hand, numerous expatriates are assigned to developed countries, and such experience is considered critical for advancement in many multinational firms (Galbraith and Edstrom, 1976).

An additional reason for transfer is to control locations or subsidiaries distant from headquarters by transferring loyal central-office staff to them in positions of high responsibility. This has traditionally been a reason for transferring headquarters-nationality managers to foreign subsidiaries rather than relying on host-country managers as top executives (Zeira, 1976). It may also be an unspoken rationale for some domestic transfers.

Less obvious, perhaps even covert reasons for transfers also exist. One which has been suggested is to increase employee commitment and loyalty to the organization (Edstrom and Galbraith, 1977). The idea is that people who are moved frequently may come to see the organization as the only constant in their lives, since they never stay in one place long enough to become heavily involved with competing activities or friends. At the same time, individuals who are not strongly committed to the organization select themselves out, leaving only those who are willing to put the company's desires at the top of their priority list (Edstrom and Galbraith, 1977; Tiger, 1978). As logical as these arguments seem, evidence that frequency of transfer is related to organizational commitment is mixed. For instance Brett and Werbel (1980) report a weak positive relationship between moves per year and job involvement. However, Pinder and Das (1979) found that total number of transfers was unrelated to organizational commitment, and that number of transfers per year employed had a weak but significant negative relation to commitment ($r = -.13$, $p < .05$). Thus, from the organization's point of view, transfer is probably a largely ineffective tool for building employee commitment.

Two other covert rationales for transfer are 1) to homogenize and control managers, and 2) to increase mutual understanding and communication (Edstrom and Galbraith, 1977). Edstrom and Galbraith (1977) refer to the former as "control by socialization." Pinder explains further (1981, p.11) "Like most control devices, they (transfers) function to counteract differences between employees and foster homogeneity of thought, opinion, values, and behavior. The higher the overall rates of mobility among a cohort of managers, the more communality is possible in their socialization and training experiences... Yet, at the same time, transfers forestall the development of cabals that might pose serious threats to the status quo." These arguments make sense, but the authors know of no research which either supports or discredits the effects of transfer on homogeneity.

Galbraith and Edstrom (1976) believe that transfer may be a way to increase coordination while allowing decentralized decision-making among interdependent but geographically separated units. This could occur if frequently transferred managers have a larger network of friends and contacts throughout the entire organization, and are able to use these contacts informally to gather the information necessary to make local decisions which are consistent with the needs of other parts of the organization. This interesting idea received some support from a reanalysis by Galbraith and Edstrom (1976) of data collected by Newport (1969). They found that frequency of transfer was positively related to the number of colleagues outside one's department contacted monthly ($r = .25$). Thus, transfer may be a way to increase communication, and may even have effects on the organization's decision structure.

Costs

A further effect of transfers of which organizations are increasingly becoming aware is costs. Business Week (July 27, 1981) reports that the average transfer now costs $30,000 (up from $6,000 to $10,000 in 1972), and lists a case in which a single move of a $37,600/year manager cost his employer $114,733 over four years. The large recent jump in costs is due to high mortgage rates and the increased cost of houses, since many organizations now offer mortgage rate and housing cost differential payments in order to induce employees to relocate (Moore, 1981). In response to this expense, many major organizations are trying to reduce the number of employee transfers, particularly lateral transfers. Moves are being approved only when both present staffing needs and future development needs can be met at once, with a single move (Business Week, July 27, 1981). These new policies, together with a greater reluctance to relocate on the part of employees, has already resulted in an estimated 23% drop in employer-sponsored moves in the last two years (Moore, 1981). On the other hand, Moore (1981) also expresses the opinion that transfers are again increasing in frequency as companies attempt to fill the critical vacancies created by massive reductions in transfers last year.

Fewer transfers may result in savings above and beyond reduced relocation payments. Pinder and Das (1979) note that an employee must stay in a job for quite a while before he or she becomes "profitable" for the organization (see Figure 4). It takes a while to learn the new job and to begin performing at a high level, relative to the organization's fixed costs in pay and benefits. Once an employee passes the "break even point," he or she should stay in that job and be profitable for as long as is feasible. Frequent transfers may mean that employees spend much of their time learning new jobs rather than producing in them. Of course, fewer transfers does not necessarily mean fewer job changes, since changes of duties within a site are certainly possible, and in fact may become more common as geographic changes decrease. However, the opportunities within a site are probably more limited, so mean time in-job, and hence profitability according to Pinder and Das (1979), are likely to increase.

As mentioned above, there does seem to be a trend toward greater rootedness among American managers, which was noticeable in 1972 (Business Week, October 28, 1972). The trend has gained substantial momentum since then (Business Week, July 27, 1981; Weiner, 1981). Dual career couples and an increasing concern for the quality of life and non-work pursuits have resulted in more and more individuals being unwilling to move. They prefer changing employers and staying in the same city rather than moving with the same employer, as a means of advancing their careers.

Several organizations have reported that transfers are being turned down much more frequently than in the recent past. Some sources report that one in ten transfer offers is refused (Moore, 1981) while others estimate that up to half of all transfer offers are declined (Weiner, 1981).

This new trend may cause temporary staffing difficulties for employers, and make long run career and human resources planning programs more important. Some organizations are already carefully locating new facilities in "desirable" small city and town settings that managers are willing to move into,

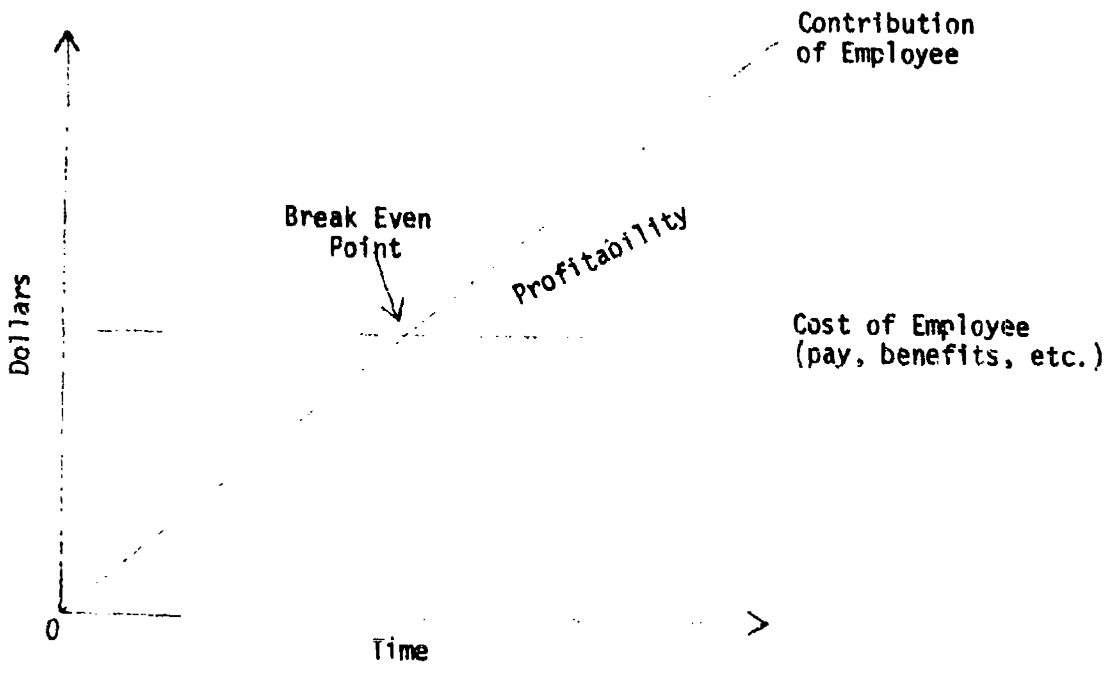

Figure 4

Cost versus Profitability of Transferred Employees

Adapted from C.C. Pinder and H. Das, Hidden Costs and Benefits of Employee Transfers. Human Resources Planning, 1979, 2, 135-145.

and where a plentiful local labor supply exists (Business Week, July 27, 1981). A longer term solution, according to Business Week, is to conduct more and more business long-distance, through tele-conferencing. Eventually, nearly everyone may be able to live wherever they wish and work from their home through their computer/communication system.

In conclusion, it appears that both the total number of transfers in organizations, and the frequency of transfers of individual employees, are declining noticeably. In the present economic and social atmosphere, only the "obvious" reasons for transfer -- necessary staffing and development -- are at all justifiable. Transfer to improve communication and decentralize decision making is effective only when many managers are transfered repeatedly, and it is likely that any benefits to be gained in these areas would soon be offset by the human and economic costs of transfer. Even less obvious reasons such as the building of commitment and homogeneity are no longer acceptable to either employees or their employers, who must foot the ever increasing bill.

Transfers: An Employee Viewpoint

In this section, the effects of transfer on employee attitudes and job behavior will be discussed. Family adjustment issues will be presented in the succeeding section. The authors realize that work and family spheres of life interact, that difficulties at home may influence job performance, and that demands and stresses at work impact on the family (Renshaw, 1976). Though work and family are treated in separate sections of this paper, the reader should remember that the two are highly interdependent.

In the pages that follow, a "successful" transfer from the viewpoint of the employee will be defined; then transfers in general will be discussed, drawing on the organizational socialization literature and the small amount of research which has focused specifically on transfer. After this foundation has been laid the unique problems of foreign transfer will be presented. Hypotheses about factors which influence the "success" of transfer will be suggested throughout.

Successful Employee Transfer

We will consider that the overall success of a transfer consists of two components. The successful adjustment of the employee to his or her new job, and the successful adjustment of the family to the new community. As mentioned above, we will treat these two aspects of transfer separately, although they are surely interrelated.

In a successful employee-job transfer, the employee, within a reasonable length of time, will have learned how to do the new job properly, will have developed any new skills needed, will be motivated to perform well on the job, will be integrated into the social network of the work place, will be reasonably satisfied with the job, and will stay with the organization. The "reasonable length of time" referred to above will vary with the complexity of the job, and its difference or similarity to positions previously held by the employee. For the remainder of this section, the phrase "successful job transfer" will refer to the above collection of characteristics.

The Decision to Transfer

Little is known about how organizational decision makers choose who to promote or offer a transfer (Anderson, Milkovich, and Tsui, 1981; Stumpf and London, 1981; Verdi, 1980). On the individuals' side, even less is known about how people decide whether or not to accept a transfer or a promotion. Campion, Lord, and Pursell (1981) found that females, older, and less educated blue collar employees were more likely to turn down seniority based promotion offers. In their sample, promotions did not involve transfers. Hammer and Vardi (1981) report that nonsupervisory employees who are high on internal locus of control engage in more career self-management, including seeking out and accepting more job changes. Brett and Werbel (1980) found that transfers were most likely to be accepted if they were perceived as a step in career development and advancement. Younger employees were more willing to move, and families whose last move had been smooth and easy were more willing to move again. Whether or not the spouse worked was not a determinant of willingness to move, but spouse job involvement was (Brett and Werbel, 1980). Additional studies of the determinants of willingness to move are needed to further understand this decision process. Some hypotheses which seem reasonable but have little or no support as yet are listed below:

Hypothesis 1 Lateral transfers will be rejected more often than promotional or clearly developmental transfers.

Hypothesis 2 Transfers will be rejected more often when employees believe that refusing a transfer will not damage their future career.

Hypothesis 3 Middle-aged employees with teenaged children will reject transfers more often than will younger employees.

This last hypothesis is based on Brett and Werbel's (1980) finding that young employees are more likely to move, the finding that transfer is harder on older children than younger children (Burke, 1974), and the guess that mothers of older children are more likely to be tied to jobs than mothers of very young children.

Choice. The freedom of civilian employees to refuse transfers seems to have increased in the last few years. Organizations are becoming more sensitive to people's very legitimate concerns about frequent company-sponsored moves. Refusing a transfer or two does not mean the end of one's career any longer, though a persistent refusal to relocate necessarily limits upward mobility in large, multi-location firms (Business Week, July 27, 1981). While allowing employees more leeway in deciding whether to accept transfers may create staffing problems, it probably also increases the likelihood of transfers being "successful," for two reasons. First, employees and their families will refuse transfers to jobs or locations to which they do not think they could adjust. Second, in freely choosing to accept a transfer, employees should feel more committed to making it work out, since they should feel personally responsible for the decision. This choice-commitment effect has been observed in a number of studies in the past (Staw, 1976).

Hypothesis 4 Perceived freedom of choice in accepting a transfer will be positively correlated with transfer success.

Information. The importance of giving the employee full and accurate information about the new job and community prior to asking for a decision should not be underestimated. Information will allow a more correct decision to be made by the employee. For instance, he or she may feel incapable of performing the new job once the duties are fully explained. In this case, the employee's refusal to transfer might save the organization an expensive failure and the employee great discomfort and damage to self esteem. Finding out the details of life in a particular city can likewise enable a family to more correctly judge whether they could be happy there. Ideally, job and community information should come from those who have the most accurate and relevant knowledge, such as incumbents of the job and residents of the community in question.

Being provided accurate information prior to making a decision to transfer should also increase commitment to the decision, and encourage successful follow through. One of the reasons that realistic job previews reduce turnover is thought to be via the mechanism of _informed_ choice increasing commitment and personal responsibility with regard to the decision to accept a job (Wanous, 1980).

Possessing realistic information prior to a transfer may also aid in "coping." Potential unpleasant aspects of the new site can be prepared for, and coping strategies can be planned and rehearsed in advance. The preparation will make the actual unpleasant event or circumstance less stressful and more easy to deal with (Ilgen and Seely, 1974; Meichenbaum, Turk, and Burstein, 1975).

Time. The amount of time given to an employee and his or her family to make the transfer decision may also be important for success. Having a generous amount of time in which to decide should allow employees to carefully consider all aspects of the potential move and to discuss and resolve disagreement within the family. A decision growing out of a thorough and unhurried decision making process is likely to be better, more unanimous, and to have greater commitment to carrying it out successfully.

Hypothesis 5 The amount of time allowed to make a transfer decision will be positively correlated with transfer success for both the employee and family.

Having sufficient time to prepare for the move itself will allow time to find adequate housing, time to plan ahead for the logistics of the move, time to become "mentally prepared" to move, and time for adequate and satisfying "leave taking" of friends who will be left behind. All of these should contribute to the ease of the move. Burke (1974) found that amount of time allowed to make a transfer was positively correlated with feeling important to the organization and with the amount of increase in satisfaction from the old to the new job. Pinder (1979) found that time was one of four factors which predicted employees' satisfaction with their organization's transfer policy.

Hypothesis 6 The amount of time allowed to prepare for the move will be positively correlated with transfer success for both the employee and family.

Adjustment to the Job

Given that an employee has accepted a transfer, there are many other things which may affect the eventual success of the transfer. In this section we will consider primarily the employee and his or her adjustment to the new job. Much of this section will be based on the socialization literature. Our discussion begins with anticipatory socialization -- the mental preparation made by the employee prior to entering the new job. We then proceed to consider aspects of the new job and how the actual transition is handled, as they impact on adjustment to the job.

Anticipatory Socialization. A great deal of recent research has suggested that having realistic expectations about what a new job is like prior to beginning work on that job facilitates adjustment (Wanous, 1980). Specifically, 'realistic job previews" tend to reduce turnover (Weitz, 1956; Wanous, 1973; Ilgen and Seely, 1974; Zaharia and Baumeister, 1981) and occasionally produce increased satisfaction among newcomers to organizations (Wanous, 1973; Youngberg, 1963). Formal "realistic job previews" are probably rare in domestic transfers. However, one could argue that individuals moving from one job to another within the same organization are already likely to have quite realistic expectations, relative to a newcomer to the organization, for a number of reasons. First, many aspects of the organization with which the transferee is already familiar will not be different in the new job. Organization-wide goals, policies, and procedures will remain the same, so there is less total room for unrealistic expectations to exist for transferees as compared to brand new hires. Second, other jobs in the organization are probably more visible to organization members than to outsiders. Members are likely to have access to more information about various jobs in the organization, as they interact with incumbents of the roles they may some day hold. The common practice of moving up into one's superior's job certainly assures that one will possess a great deal of realistic knowledge about the job before assuming it. On the other hand, some jobs may be relatively rare in an organization, or occur only at specific sites. In this case, transferees may have more difficulty developing accurate expectations about their new assignment. Even in this case, however, the organization's "grape vine" may provide information to the transferee which would not be available to outsiders or new hires. In an organization with a history of frequent transfers, one may often be able to learn about particular jobs or sites from former co-workers who have been transferred there, or present co-workers who were stationed there in the past. Information obtained from such informal sources has the added benefit of usually being more accurate and more relevant than information obtained via formal organizational channels (Wheeler, 1966). For all these reasons, transferees should have more detailed and realistic expectations about their new assignment than would new hires for the same job. Therefore, employees who are transferred should have fewer problems with "reality shock," and should adjust more quickly to their new assignment, when compared to newcomers to the organization.

In studying a sample of transferees, Brett and Werbel (1980) found that those who were better informed about the nature of the job prior to the move had fewer problems in adjusting to the new position.

Hypothesis 7 Individuals who have a great deal of information, and realistic perceptions about the job they are moving to will adjust to that job more quickly than individuals without much information or with unrealistic perceptions.

As noted before, it is unclear whether more rapid adjustment when more information is present is due to better self-selection, improved coping, less "reality shock," greater commitment, or some other mechanism.

Structural Factors of the Transfer. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) have identified several structural aspects of entering a new role, some of which are relevant to transfers. One such aspect is whether new role holders are socialized individually, or collectively. In industry, as mentioned above, transfers are usually individual, with one employee being moved at a time. This means that the transferee is alone in the new situation, without other equally new colleagues to provide help in adjusting. On the other hand, a sole newcomer may receive a greater share of individual attention and coaching from others than would be the case when several transferees arrive at once. When there is a group of newcomers, recruits can provide support and help each other solve problems, leaving them less dependent on the organization than an individual newcomer. Group transfers may also help spouses adjust, if they knew each other prior to the move, or form a "support group" after the move.

A second dimension identified by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) is formality. New recruits often enter a formal training program, or go through a probationary period, during which they are clearly marked as "learners" or "rookies." Transferees may occasionally enter a training program, but more commonly they immediately take on the full status of the new job, and learn the new role through informal on-the-job training. This process may be quite stressful, and the new incumbent may experience a great deal of role ambiguity, as he or she struggles to learn the new job and perform it effectively at the same time. Transferees could probably benefit from the same attention to orientation and training as is usually reserved for new recruits to the organization.

Hypothesis 8 Transferees placed in a formal training or orientation program will experience less stress than those who immediately take on full responsibility in the new job.

A third dimension which may be relevant is whether socialization to the new position is "serial" or "disjunctive" (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Serial means that the transferee is stepping into a well defined role and is trained by someone who occupies or has occupied that role. In this case, the new role holder is taught to behave exactly like his or her predecessors, and stability and predictability is maintained. In disjunctive strategies, the role is either entirely new, or no former occupants are available to train the new role holder. In this case, learning the role may be more difficult, but the opportunity to innovate, or creatively change the role is also greater. Most transferees probably move into existing roles, but often their predecessor is transferred shortly before or after they arrive, creating a slightly disjunctive setting, and probably contributing to role learning problems.

Hypothesis 9 Learning the new role will be easier and quicker if former or present incumbents are available to help teach the newcomer.

Motivation. It seems likely that the motivation of transferees to succeed in their new jobs should be quite high. To a greater and greater extent, employees are free to choose which transfer offers they will accept. Presumably, they will accept only transfers to locations and jobs which they truly desire and prefer over their present situation. Since they want the new job, motivation should be high. Further, since transfer is now more of a free choice than an organizational command, individuals should feel personally responsible for the success of their transfer, and thus work harder at making a good adjustment to the new job.

The motivation of transferees also seems to be enhanced by quick success on the new job. Brett and Werbel (1980) have found that transfers are much more likely to be successful when new incumbents achieve high performance and receive positive feedback on some portion of the job within the first month. Early success on a challenging task has also been shown to aid long term career progress of managers (Berlew and Hall, 1966). Thus to help motivate continued effort, early success or positive feedback seems quite important, not just in the first job of career, but at the beginning of each new job as well.

Hypothesis 10 Experiencing success and/or positive feedback within the first few weeks on the new job will facilitate rapid employee adjustment to the new job.

Another important consideration may be the motivation of co-workers of the newly transferred employee. Edstrom and Galbraith (1977) suggest that frequent transfers tend to create employees who are conscientious in helping transferees adjust, since they understand the needs of the new job holder and know that they may be the next to be moved However, this "Golden Rule" philosophy does not always prevail. Co-workers may be reluctant to help a transferee who has been given a job which they feel should have been filled by someone already at their own site. The latter problem may be expected to decline as cost-conscious organizations make all possible with-in site promotions before resorting to a transfer. In fact Business Week (July 27, 1981) cites a case where a less qualified person was given the job, simply because he was already stationed at the site where a vacancy occurred.

The importance of helpful co-workers and supervisors cannot be overestimated. It is often noted that the transferred employee (usually husband) has a great advantage over the rest of the family in terms of ease of adjustment, since he enters a ready-made role and social system (Tiger, 1978; Vandervelde, 1979). However, if co-workers are not helpful, his task becomes much more difficult. Louis (1980) has noted the errors and frustrations newcomers can encounter in trying to interpret and understand an unfamiliar organizational setting when input from experienced insiders is lacking. Brett and Werbel (1980) asked newly transferred employees how they coped with the new job. By far the most common response (88%) was to ask someone else at work what they needed to know. Obviously, having someone able and willing to answer is critical.

Hypothesis 11 Adjustment to the job will occur more quickly and easily when co-workers and superiors are friendly and helpful than when they are not.

Boundaries. Earlier, we suggested that the more boundaries crossed (i.e., to a different function and different hierarchical level), the greater the adjustment problems. Beyond some minimum amount of change, this is probably true. However, transfers involving no substantive job change, crossing no boundaries except geographical ones, may have problems all their own. Both Burke (1972) and Pinder (1977) found that lateral transfers were much less satisfying than transfers involving a promotion. Lateral transfers present at least two types of problems. First, they may be taken as negative feedback from the organization, and are often interpreted as representing a lack of progress or forward momentum in one's career. Second, lateral transfers may be more difficult financially for the employee, as they are usually not accompanied by as large a pay increase as are promotional transfers. Thus, amount of change in the job, or number of boundaries crossed, may bear a curvilinear relationship with adjustment to the transfer. Brett and Werbel

(1980) studied the easiness/difficulty of transfers in terms of happiness, anxiety, and "nervous behavior" such as insomnia and indigestion. They confirm that a transfer is easier when "it involved only a moderate change in terms of job level or function" (p.8). Louis (1980) agrees that a great deal of change, or crossing many boundaries, may make the transfer more difficult.

Hypothesis 12 As the number of functional and hierarchical boundaries crossed increases, the difficulty of learning the new job increases.

Hypothesis 13 Lateral transfers will be less satisfying to the employee (general job satisfaction, work itself, career satisfaction) than will promotional transfers.

The crossing of geographic or cultural boundaries is also important, to the employee and particularly to his or her family. In the next section, the most extreme case of crossing a cultural boundary, foreign transfer, will be discussed in terms of the employee. Family effects will be considered later.

Foreign Transfer

Many Americans are now working for multi-national firms. It is not uncommon for American employees to be asked to transfer to a foreign location for a period of several years. Such transfers produce problems all their own for both the employee and his or her family. For instance, John Hoffman, the President of Family Relocation Service, Inc., has estimated that half of all Americans transfered overseas by their employer either return home early or are unsatisfactory performers while at the foreign location. He further estimates that the average cost to the employer of an overseas transfer for a family is $125,000 (Action, 1981). Clearly, unsuccessful transfers cost employers a great deal of money. Harari and Zeira (1978) cite sources stating that 80% of expatriates sent to Japan were considered failures by their employers, and that 90% were considered "less successful in Japan than in their previous assignments in their home countries" (Harari and Zeira, 1978, p.56).

Reasons offered for these dismal figures range from improper selection and orientation, to improper job design, to ethnocentrism of host country nationals. A number of articles have been written on these topics, though little empirical research has taken place. We will first discuss the selection of expatriates, then their orientation, and finally issues relating to adjustment after arrival in the host country.

Selection. Selecting expatriates who will succeed is not an easy task. According to Sieveking and Marston (1978, p.20), "assuming that any good domestic employee will be a good expatriate employee can be disastrous." Voris (1975, p.332) elaborates, "In almost every case, failure has not come because of lack of management expertise or professional skill. The person's demise is invariably caused by personality, emotion, lack of empathy, family pressure, health, prejudice, or political problems." While some of these latter characteristics surely affect success in domestic jobs as well, they seem much more critical for overseas assignments. The criteria usually weighted most heavily, "expertise and professional skill" are inadequate for predicting expatriate success.

Companies with many expatriate managers often have a fairly involved system for selecting overseas transferees. Teague (1976) describes a composite system based on the results of a Conference Board survey of multinational firms. The first step is simply to identify employees who seem to have the needed skills. The records of these individuals are studied more closely and some are eliminated from consideration. Remaining candidates are interviewed several times, then ranked by line and personnel managers. At least some of the interviewers should be veterans of successful overseas assignments themselves (Egan, 1976). The job is offered to the candidate ranked first, and if he or she is interested, he or she then enters an orientation program for the relevant country. At any point, if candidates discover something they object to about the prospective job or location, they may change their mind and refuse the transfer.

Teague (1976) is no more clear than most other authors in describing the desired characteristics of an expatriate candidate who is likely to be successful overseas. Many lists of traits are available, none of which are backed up by research evidence. Some suggested characteristics to look for in candidates and their families appear in Table 1. Operationally measuring these variables is problematic.

Several improvements to expatriate selection systems have been suggested recently. Howard (1974) and Tung (1981) both point out the importance of considering the specific job. Tung hypothesized that where the job requires extensive interaction with host-country nationals, and there are large cultural differences, personality and adaptability will be critical predictors of success. When the job requires little interaction and/or the cultures are

Table 1

Characteristics of Successful Expatriates and Their Families

"Able to speak the language of the assigned country, well versed in its politics, economics, and culture ... sustained by a healthy, willing family ... have a fondness for adventure balanced by cool composure, ... capable of modifying his basic work ethic without abandoning it ... should feel, honestly, that the job represents an opportunity for adventure." unprejudiced, motivated by more than just the "glamour of going abroad."	Voris, 1975
"Technical ability; supervisory and training ability, organizing ability; adaptability/interpersonal skill; and breadth (ability to improvise)." Self-reliant, resourceful, can work without close supervision, adaptable, can learn the language.	Teague, 1976.
"A positive, flexible attitude toward change," not strongly tied to friends and organizations beyond the nuclear family, high family cohesiveness and stability, absence of behavior problems in children, willingness to openly discuss and consider all potential stresses of the transfer.	Business Week, April 16, 1979
"Someone who is stimulated and intrigued by uncertainty. Curiosity is mandatory. Openness to challenge as demonstrated by superior work records, civic activities, contributions which the employee was not required to make, independent adventures, and the setting of progressively higher personal and occupational goals ... Avoid selecting those who show over-concern with physical comfort, safety, predictability, familiar foods, sophisticated medical services and other conveniences of a highly technical society."	Sieveking, Anchor, and Marston, 1981
"He should have the stamina of an Olympic runner, the mental agility of an Einstein, the conversational skill of a professor of languages, the detachment of a judge, the tact of a diplomat, and the perseverance of an Egyptian pyramid builder"	Heller, 1980, p.48

similar, technical competence can be the sole predictor. Howard (1974) suggests obtaining expert ratings of the importance of a set of technical, managerial, and personal skills for each job, then evaluating candidates on possession of each skill. Psychological tests, interviews, and examination of past performance all contribute to candidate evaluation. A non-compensatory decision scheme is then used, with candidates being selected only when they meet or exceed the required score on each skill. Newman, Bhatt, and Gutteridge (1978) agree that a non-compensatory system should be most effective in reducing the failure rate of employees selected for overseas service. These authors also suggested narrowing down the list of personality characteristics considered to a few, well-understood and easily measured traits, the predictive validity of which can be investigated empirically. Specifically, they believe that interpersonal trust, locus of control, and value systems may turn out to be useful predictors.

Several companies have developed "adaptability screening interviews" for the potential expatriate and spouse which do seem to reduce the early return rate of overseas transferees. Ideally, the adaptability interview would be used in conjunction with a good orientation program. In this case, total attrition rates of about 5% to 10% have been reported, compared to the 40% rate experienced by some organizations employing neither method. The adaptability interview would follow a determination that the employee possesses the necessary job skills and has some interest in accepting the transfer. The purpose of the interview is to "alert the couple to the stresses that they may not have fully considered when previously agreeing to take the assignment," and to encourage an open discussion and self-evaluation of the impact of these stresses (Business Week, April 27, 1979, p.127). Stresses include not only the problems of adjusting to different cultural, language, or standard of living conditions in the new country, but also stresses engendered by leaving behind activities or individuals. For instance, leaving behind an aged parent or a church, sports, or school activity which was central to the life of one or more family members can be very difficult, and may leave a void which is hard to fill in another country.

Once the organization decides who is best qualified for the overseas transfer, the problem of transfer acceptance by the employee becomes salient. The reasons that individuals choose foreign placements and the characteristics that these individuals possess can impinge a great deal on their ability to adjust and succeed in a foreign country. Although there is a certain amount of research in the area, very little has been of a predictive nature. Hays, Korth and Roudiani (1972) found that the expatriate is more often a college graduate (and more often in a liberal arts field) whose wife is also well educated. Both husband and wife tend to come from more successful families. Gonzalez and Negandhi (1967) found that overseas placement was not usually a preconceived career goal; chance plays a major role. They found that circumstances influencing the decision include opportunities for advancement and recognition, desire to travel and live abroad, the desire for and overseas career and financial rewards. In a similar vein, Miller and Hill (1978) found that expatriates cited the following reasons for accepting overseas placement: career potential, overseas opportunity, family influence, economic motives, and the fact that they feel competent to do the job.

Orientation. The (tentative) decision to accept an overseas transfer is usually followed by some kind of orientation. Teague (1976, p.44) states that, "The vast majority of companies in the Conference Board survey employing over 100 U.S. expatriates do have formal orientation programs." In setting up an orientation program, Teague (1976) notes that it is important to distinguish information which the candidate needs in order to make an intelligent decision about whether to accept the transfer from information which the committed transferee should have prior to the move, from information which can safely be given after arrival in the new country. Different types of programs may be needed to supply the three types of information.

Marston (1979) describes an orientation program which successfully reduces turnover among Middle Eastern expatriates. The program first covers the job itself and related issues of company policies and the employment contract. While discussing the job, Sieveking, Anchor, and Marston (1981, p.198), "seek to show the expatriate how he or she can be rewarded in ways in addition to income and travel. He or she will be rewarded by novelty, challenge, and the opportunity to make a contribution." This sounds very much like what Griffin (1981) had supervisors do -- point out to employees the various "enriching" dimensions of their jobs. By merely labeling and drawing attention to these job characteristics, subordinate satisfaction and perception of enriching task characteristics were increased. This is probably a technique worth using in the orientation of all new or newly transferred employees, expatriate and domestic.

Another section of the orientation consists of information about the country and its culture, religion, climate, and so on. Building on this information, practical advice on living conditions, schools, recreational opportunities, and coping with problems is given. Finally, the details of travel arrangements are thoroughly explained. Throughout the orientation, realism is stressed. A host country national and a former expatriate are both included in every program. "Seeing" the new country, through extensive use of films or pictures, is also considered very important. Spouses of married employees are required to attend the two and one half day briefing. According to Marston (1979), this program has reduced turnover of expatriates in the Middle East from 25% per year to less than 10%, and has more than paid for itself.

Some companies go farther than merely providing information. In Teague's (1976) survey, one third of the organizations who replied allowed the employee and/or family to make a pre-transfer visit to the new country to see it for themselves. About half of Teague's respondents also required language training for expatriates. Harari and Zeira (1978, p.60) suggest that expatriate managers should also be thoroughly oriented to "internal organizational processes" in the host country, including "leadership, decision making, communication, and group behavior" and also to environmental business factors such as law and government regulation.

Tung (1981) discusses several additional training and orientation methods. She says that sensitivity training could be part of a training program for expatriate executives, if their overseas jobs will require extensive interaction with people from a vastly different culture. The use of a "cultural assimilator" -- study of a series of critical incident stories about expatriate-native interactions -- can also be a powerful and rapid learning tool. Finally she suggests that spending time in any culture other than one's own can be a useful eye-opening experience. Thus, if a preliminary visit to the foreign country of assignment is not feasible, a week spent in a minority ghetto or Indian reservation may provide the necessary experience. Not surprisingly, Tung's (1981) survey found that the latter strategy is very seldom used.

Adjustment to the Job. Some expatriates have trouble adjusting to their new jobs. In some cases, the jobs were not what they expected. According to Heenan (1970), young expatriate managers are often frustrated by the lack of challenge and opportunity in the more rigidly autocratic management structures found in some countries. Marston (1979) has also noted this problem and labeled it "job shock." He states (p.23) that expatriates in the Middle East, "frequently find themselves frustrated, distraught, confused, and upset.

Since they are not able to be creative and innovative in many ways, are not able to make decisions without going through the bureaucracy, and are not able to move quickly, they are unprepared for the delays they experience, the lack of forthcoming decisions, or the lack of support provided to them from their home office or from their clients in the host country."

Solutions include better orientation, so that these frustrations will not be surprises, or modification if the job itself. Heenan (1970) suggests that decision making in foreign subsidiaries be decentralized so as to vertically enlarge expatriate jobs. He also recommends continuous training for managers serving overseas, so that they may continue to develop their skills, and shorter overseas assignments so that employees are exposed to a wider range of experiences and not stuck in the same job for too long.

Another problem which expatriates may have in adjusting to their job is in winning the acceptance of the host country nationals who are their peers and subordinates. According to Zeira (1979), ethnocentrism is a strong and widely held attitude in Europe. Ethnocentrism is the belief that host country nationals rather than Americans should hold all positions of importance in subsidiaries in their country, and that expatriates should speak the language, understand the culture, and comply with local management practices just like a native. Not surprisingly, this attitude can cause problems for the American assigned an important post in a European subsidiary. Expatriates almost never live up to the standards espoused by host country nationals. Even if an expatriate spoke the language and conformed to local practices flawlessly, host country nationals could still interpret his or her presence as indicating that they are considered less trustworthy or less competent by the headquarters which assigned an expatriate to help run operations in their country.

The ethnocentric attitude does have some valid points. Often American expatriates do not understand local practices well enough, and make costly errors based on their assumptions that doing business overseas is just like doing business back home. To help overcome this type of problem, Harari and Zeira (1978) suggest that managers transferred to Japan receive extensive "post-departure training." They (p.61) make the startling recommendation that "newly arrived expatriates be exempted from any managerial responsibility during the first several months of their stay in Japan." During this period, expatriates would undergo intensive language training, meet important government and business contacts, make friends with their new peers, and receive coaching from the manager whom they will be replacing. If "several" months must be devoted solely to acculturation, then Heenan's (1970) suggestion of shortening the length of foreign assignments certainly would not be practical or cost effective.

Repatriation. The area of repatriation has received somewhat more mention recently, which is fitting because it is a very important facet of the expatriate's life. Many expatriate decisions and behaviors, starting at the recruitment stage and continuing through the foreign placement, are affected by expectations concerning the eventual return. Howard (1980) has noted that the returning manager may have many problems to face; runaway inflation, no suitable job upon return, loss of career and promotional opportunities, resentment from colleagues and other personnel, reverse culture shock and a host of other negative factors. Loss of "connections" and informal influence may also be a cost of overseas isolation which becomes visible upon repatriation. There seems to be substantial agreement that advance planning must be made for repatriation to go smoothly (Teague, 1976). Howard (1980) suggests the following steps: 1) pre-plan the eventual return, 2) develop a formal de-briefing program, 3) prepare the expatriate for a new professional career, 4) provide a professional challenge, 5) provide secretarial assistance and an advance financial planning service, 6) give a re-entry bonus and relocation allowance and 7) assist the spouse in finding employment. Foote (1977) further suggests rewarding good performance overseas with promotions at home, and assigning a headquarters "sponsor" to look after the career interests of expatriates who might otherwise be forgotten. Dow Chemical Company has 10 full-time counselors whose job is to stay in touch with expatriates and plan for their return to an appropriate position (Business Week, June 11, 1979). Programs of this sort make it easier to attract good managers to overseas assignments, and to keep them satisfied and with the organization after return.

Effect of Job Transfer on the Corporate Family

As was indicated in the preceding sections, the employee and organization can experience some adjustment problems when an intraorganizational transfer is made. It has also been demonstrated that the employee and organization can either benefit or suffer from the move. However, the effects of a job transfer are not restricted to the employee or organization alone as relocation can be a stressful or rewarding event for the employee's family as well. Sometimes the corporate move is a positive experience for the family in that it offers opportunities to meet new people, develop new interests, and learn about other cultures and customs (Pospisil, 1974). Yet, at other times, transfers create family unhappiness and disruption.

While companies have become increasingly generous with relocation expenses, the personal and emotional aspects of the move are still largely left up to the employee and his/her family (Frankel and Strauss, 1981). The common organizational policy of "keeping out of an employee's personal affairs" stems from the belief that any manager who successfully handles company business should be able to handle his or her own family -- therefore, any emotional costs of the relocation are left totally to the employee and the family. And it is with the family that the job transfer often poses the greater threat. The employee has his/her work with its numerous new peer associations while the rest of the family is cast into a new community and left to reestablish community ties, friendships, and affiliations on its own. Financial problems, increased loneliness, heightened marital friction, difficulties with children, spouse career frustrations, and identity confusion are only some of the possible by-products of a company transfer (Seidenberg, 1973). Case histories focusing on the trauma family members experience as a result of their "nomadic" lifestyle are frequent in the popular press. More recently, a popular relocation topic has been the plight of the dual career couple in which one member is being transferred while the other refuses to leave his or her present job. Because transfers do have an impact on the lives of the employee's family, and considering the growing importance of the spouse in determining employee attitudes and career decisions, transfer effects on families warrant further investigation. Unfortunately, much of what has been written consists of case histories, and the empirical research which does exist is usually descriptive, is lacking in theory, and is scattered throughout the management, military, medical, psychology, and family counseling literatures. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made to integrate some of these research findings and suggest hypotheses still in need of testing. We will first define successful family transfer, then discuss the decision to transfer, then issues of adjustment following transfer. Finally, the rather unique problems of unaccompanied military transfers will be discussed in terms of their impact on the family.

Successful Family Transfer

The "success" of a family move is clearly a multivariate construct that has not been carefully explored and conceptualized. Brett and Werbel (1980) have done the best job of measuring success, including the following in their research: satisfaction with the school and neighborhood for each child, occurrence of a variety of problems relating to school, making new friends, and missing old friends, satisfaction and anxiety of both spouses, and occurrence of "nervous behaviors" such as insomnia and indigestion. Additional work on what constitutes success, and how the various dimensions are related to each other, is definitely needed. For the purposes of the following discussion, a successful transfer is considered to have occurred if: 1) all members of the family find the move satisfactory, 2) all members have established memberships, activity patterns, and friendships to the extent that they desire them (or to an extent comparable to that enjoyed in the previous location), 3) problems with children, substance abuse, marital discord, etc. are no worse than in the previous location, and 4) acute tension, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms do not occur or are extremely short-lived.

Decision to Transfer

Winning family consent to a proposed relocation has been identified as a very important factor in an employee's decision to relocate. Levenson and Hollman (1980) surveyed 300 recently transferred executives and found that family acceptance of the move was the deciding factor with 46% of the executives. In another study, Brett and Werbel (1980) found that the wife's and children's reluctance to move and economic hardships were the most frequent cited reasons for rejecting a transfer. Researchers have identified some other factors that seem to mitigate against family acceptance of a corporate move, such as the attractiveness of the relocation area (Pinder, 1980; Seidenberg, 1973) and the availability of housing, schools, cultural environment and general life style in the new area (Pinder, 1980; Levenson and Hollman, 1980; Baker, 1976; Burke, 1974).

Hypothesis 14 Transfers to areas evaluated by the family as attractive in terms of geographical location, culture, city size, and quality of life are more likely to be accepted than transfers to areas evaluated less positively.

The findings on frequency of past transfer and willingness to move again are mixed. Burke (1974) reports that more frequent transfers are associated with less satisfaction at the prospect of being transferred again, on the part of the wife. Brett and Werbel (1980, p.4) found that "women who had moved in the past 18 months were substantially more supportive of a future move than women who had not." A more thorough study of the impact of frequency and recency of transfer on willingness to transfer again is clearly needed.

Dual Career Families and Transfer

An increasingly apparent problem with corporate family relocation is the proliferation of dual or two career families. In 1979, 52% of U.S. marriages were dual career marriages, an increase of almost 6% since 1975 (Business Week, July 27, 1981). Far more working wives have serious careers today -- jobs that are not easily stopped and started. Women in managerial positions comprised 19% of all managers in 1975 and were steadily occupying more technical and professional positions as was indicated by a 24% increase in these fields between 1970 and 1975 (Maynard and Zawacki, 1979). This intensifying participation of women in the labor force may have a limiting effect on the mobility of the male labor force. Where women were once sacrificing jobs and significant work relationships when their husbands were transferred, an increasing, but still small, proportion of women are refusing to move because of a husband's career. It seems likely that the probability of a family moving as a unit is influenced by whether each spouse has serious career commitments. There is very little research available on this subject, and what is available has conflicting results. For instance, Brett and Werbel (1980) found that a wife's willingness to move was not dependent on whether or not she was employed, but on her degree of job involvement. Working from a more sociological perspective, Duncan and Perrucci (1976) found that the presence of a dual career occupational situation did not affect the probability of mobility due to the husband's job. In a study involving 1122 married women college graduates, the research noted that the mere fact of wife employment did not affect the likelihood of "familial migration." Further, the wife's occupational prestige and the size of her relative contribution to total family income were also unrelated to mobility. Only husband occupational prestige and general migration probability for his occupation were predictors of familial migration. However, these findings are based on data collected between 1964 and 1968, and may no longer accurately portray the role of the wife's career on mobility. The following hypothesis may more correctly describe the influence of spouse employment in the eighties.

Hypothesis 15 Spouse employment will slightly decrease mobility of married employees. Spouse employment in an involving, professional or managerial career will substantially decrease mobility of married employees.

Vivian Pospisil (1974) contends that the wife is the key person in making the typical business move successful.[2] Baker (1976) found that the wife's inability to adapt to the new location was a major cause of managers' job failure. Getting the wife involved in the decision and planning of the move can contribute to the success of a corporate transfer. Wives are more satisfied with a move when they are included in the decision making process (Brett and Werbel, 1980). Stella Jones (reported in Pospisil, 1974), in a study of the effects of relocation on the wife, found that 64% of the wives surveyed were content in the new location when the husband made the decision to move. However, where a joint decision had been made, 79% expressed satisfaction with the move and the new location. These findings indicate that the probability of a transfer's success would increase as the wife's participation in the decision-to-move increased. Important to the wife's acceptance of a move is information regarding the new community's schools, organizations, cost of living, doctors, merchants, neighborhoods, job opportunities for her, etc.

Hypothesis 16 Amount of spouse participation in the decision to move will be positively related to spouse satisfaction with the move.

Spouse Adjustment to Transfer

Even when family acceptance of a move is achieved, satisfactory integration and adjustment in the new community is not guaranteed. This is particularly true of the "nomadic" corporate family -- the family that is forced to integrate and reintegrate itself in community after community, continually leaving behind established affiliations and friendships. Problems of spouse adjustment can occur in both work and social spheres. With regard to the former, Duncan and Perrucci (1976) concluded that geographic mobility was unfavorable to wives' continued involvement in the labor force and interfered with the development and achievement of career goals among married women.

In the social sphere, Seidenberg (1973) believes that reduction of influence in the community is a major problem faced by wives who are moved continuously because of their husbands' jobs. To illustrate this point, Seidenberg cites several cases of wives who were very active and accomplished in local civic work and activities in the community where their families had resided for years. When their husbands were transferred, the wives found themselves strangers in new communities which did not recognize the credentials, achievements, and community involvements they had developed over the years. These wives were finding that while their husbands' credentials were transferable (to the new job setting where they obtained recognition and social interaction), their previously recognized and hard-earned achievements, affiliations, and close friendships became non-existent or went unnoticed in their new communities. With the loss of prestige, power, and social identity, their interests and involvements in local activities and issues decreased drastically. The wives' unhappiness and dissatisfaction with the new surroundings were manifested in alcoholism, drug abuse, marital problems, emotional disturbances, and unsettled children. Seidenberg contends that the diminution of wives' influence in the new community often results in emotional maladjustment and depression. To further illustrate this dilemma, after interviewing 39 wives who had recently moved to a new location because of their husbands' job transfers, Burke (1972) found that many (36%) reported some dislike of their new community which they attributed to decreased involvement in the community and neighborhood social life as well as the lack of close or lasting friendships.

The sense of isolation that repeated transfer can bring to a wife is clearly reflected in this quote from a wife in Tiger's (1978, p.357) article, "only my husband knows and cares about my past and future." This frequently moved woman has had no long-term friends who have witnessed and can relate to her growth and change over the years, save her husband, who is too busy with work to notice her distress. Tiger continues, (p.358), "Even gypsies move in groups ..." Corporate wives and children "are deprived of the fundamental human requirement of social continuity and personal stability ..."

A single move may bring some distress and temporary adjustment difficulties, but frequent moves by the same family seem particularly difficult to handle. For the wife, identity in a community must repeatedly be reestablished. Seidenberg (1973) says that most people can handle this task several times in a lifetime, but doing it every year or two is very wearing. He cites several cases of corporate wives who finally "ran out of steam" and developed severe emotional problems after years of making "successful" moves.

Tiger (1978) discusses a social and psychological effect of frequent transfer which affects both husband and wife, and to some extent children. He claims that frequent moves lead to the adoption of a shallow interpersonal style, the making of acquaintances instead of friends. Individuals who know that their time with potential friends will soon be ended choose to minimize their risk and involvement by severely limiting self-disclosure. Tiger (1978, p.364) labels this a "cool social style" and likens it to a "vow of psychological silence."

The above evidence might lead one to hypothesize that individuals with a history of frequent moves are more likely to experience adjustment difficulties and related symptoms than those who have moved infrequently. On the other hand, accepting a transfer is at least partly voluntary, so that families who repeatedly choose to transfer may be composed of individuals who are able to adjust easily to a new community. Thus, it seems premature to state a directional hypothesis about the universal impact of transfer frequency.

Pinder (1977) suggested that as the perceived difference between the new and old communities (in terms of size, location, climate activities, etc.) increased, the family's ease of adjustment would decrease. He further suggests that a family's ease of adjustment in a new location will be positively related to the extent to which the new community is closer to the family's ideal desired community than was their old community. While Pinder's research does tend to support these relationships, the findings are based on relatively small sample sizes for the analyses used, and were cross sectional in nature. Further research on this topic might try to confirm Pinder's hypotheses:

Hypothesis 17 The more similar the old and new communities, the easier it will be for the family to adjust, and the more quickly they will feel comfortable and satisfied with the new community.

Hypothesis 18 The more similar the new community is to the ideal desired community (in terms of size, location, availability of activities), the easier it will be for the family to adjust, and the more quickly they will feel comfortable and satisfied with the new community.

Burke (1972, 1974) further determined that the wife's satisfaction with the new location was influenced by her feelings about her old community. There was a negative relationship between satisfaction with the old community and satisfaction with the new community, as well as "support for the hypothesis that the greater the number of ongoing systems the engineer and his wife were involved with in the old situation (community and friendship ties, etc.), or the greater their importance, the more disruptive was the job transfer" (Burke, 1972, p.245). Thus, the happier one was, and the more one leaves behind, the lower the satisfaction with the new location.

A competing hypothesis might be that satisfaction with a move is positively correlated with satisfaction with the previous location. The basis for this hypothesis is that initially satisfied individuals have proven their ability to adjust and find satisfaction in one setting, so they are likely to be able to do it again. Those dissatisfied with the previous location may be individuals who will always be dissatisfied where ever they are located. A small amount of support for this idea comes from Brett and Werbel's (1980) study. They report that wives were more willing to move again when their last move was successful and fairly easy to handle. They also found that, "Children who liked their old school usually liked their new school right away" (p.14) and that this held true whether or not the new school was in any way similar to the old school. In more general terms, the first hypothesis holds that satisfaction is largely a function of the situation (actual community characteristics), while the latter suggests that satisfaction is more a function of personal, rather than situational, characteristics. There is little research which attempts to directly compare these hypotheses, however, the incontrovertible fact that some families do make repeated successful transfers may be indirect evidence for the personal characteristics argument. Direct tests of these competing hypotheses should shed helpful light on the problem of transfer adjustment, and may aid in selecting which employees to transfer.

Hypothesis 19 Satisfaction with the former community will influence satisfaction with the new community.

There is some literature which suggests that spouse adjustment can be facilitated by support mechanisms of various sorts. Brett and Werbel (1980) asked wives in their sample about the amount of support (sympathy, encouragement, and actual help) received from their husbands, parents, and friends. Wives who were initially more unhappy about moving received more support prior to and during the move, though support, but not anxiety, declined sharply by three months after the move. This may indicate that new sources of social support need to be developed shortly after the move.

Reports of several successful support groups for transferred wives can be found in recent literature. Industry Week (1977) reports on a self-help group called Survivors of Success (S.O.S.) in Pennsylvania, in which newcomers meet to share their problems and make friends. Levin, Groves, and Lurie (1980) describe a more structured group, led by trained social workers, which operates in Palo Alto, California. Newcomers attend weekly meetings for six to ten weeks. At meetings, both positive and negative feelings about the move can be expressed freely. Grieving for friends and familiar places left behind is common during the first few meetings. These feelings are usually disapproved by the husband and organization, but in the support group, they can be expressed and dealt with. Just finding out that other women experience similar distress can be helpful to many participants. The group also provides encouragement and a new circle of friends. The group leaders report a shift from feelings of helplessness and victimization during initial meetings to increased self-confidence and perceived control in later meetings. Levin et al. (1980) strongly recommend that similar programs be made widely available for transferred wives, and that future programs should also include husbands.

Something should be said here about spouse adjustment to foreign transfers. A number of articles in popular sources have identified wife non-adjustment as a leading cause of failure and early repatriation of Americans assigned abroad (Action, 1981; Misa and Fabricatore, 1979; Tung, 1981; Voris, 1975). On the one hand, foreign transfer can provide exciting opportunities to see new places and cultures and learn a new language. On the other hand, deprivation of familiar activities and friends is much greater for foreign than domestic transfers. It is very difficult for wives to find jobs overseas, because of local norms regarding women's roles, language and cultural barriers, work permit problems, and the like. Community and volunteer activities may be different or nonexistent, and the opportunity to meet women other than corporate wives is very low. Organizations generally tend to ignore the expatriate wife, and few or no support services are available (Baker, 1976). Thus, it is not surprising that some wives fail to adjust to overseas transfers. Fewer problems may occur if the wife is informed and encouraged to participate in the decision, if she is included in orientation activities, including language training, and if on-site support is available in some form.

Children and Transfers

Relocation can also have mixed effects on "corporate" children. Family relocations can produce many of the same physical and emotional strains on the children as those imposed on the corporate wife or husband. Manifestations of transfer maladjustment -- e.g. alcoholism, severe depression, drug abuse, social withdrawal and isolation, and family disruption -- have been evident in children also. Children suffer the same losses of identity, established peer relationships, and affiliations that the parents suffer. General findings have indicated that adjustment of the move is poorer as the child gets older and has more established friendships at stake. While not totally attributing the results to relocation, Brett and Werbel (1980) found that more mobile teenagers (15-18 years old) had more frequent physical health and social behavior problems than less mobile teenagers, but that mobility was not a very powerful predictor of behavior. Seidenberg (1973) asserts that transfers have the same negative effects on children as on corporate wives who are continually uprooted from established community involvements and ties. Seidenberg also contends that physical maladjustments are more frequent in younger children and that social frustrations are more common in older children following a family move to a new community. Burke (1974) reported a rank correlation of -1.0 between number of children and mean satisfaction with the prospect of being transferred. Parents further predicted that older children would be less satisfied with moving than younger children.

Military Families

Military transfers present many characteristics which distinguish them from private industry employee transfers. Where employee relocation is a common phenomenon in private industry, transfers are a "way of life" in U.S. military organizations. Unit transfers, or transfers involving groups of employees, are common in the military but rare in the private sector. Military personnel have much less freedom to refuse a transfer or reassignment whereas private sector employees can often elect to not relocate when their companies suggest transfers. While both groups may have family responsibilities, military personnel are sometimes separated from their families for extended periods of time as a result of changes of duty station. Prolonged family separation is rare in private industry transfers, occurring only in expatriate assignments to extreme hardship areas, or the occasional unreconcilable dual-career situation.

While transferred military families may encounter many of the same relocation problems and maladjustments that private industry families encounter, they also encounter both advantages and disadvantages unique to the military setting. Military families may live in communities composed predominately of other military families. This military community allows/demands use of military-provided services such as on-base housing, military medical care, on-base entertainment, and the like. In some cases, these facilities may be viewed as inadequate or substandard, yet no practical alternatives may be available (if base location is remote or off-base living is too costly). Individuals may also feel stifled in that they are unable to meet any non-military people. On the other hand, support for relocated military families is often much greater than for corporate families. Neighbors on base are likely to be very helpful and friendly, as they are easily able to empathize with others experiencing transfer. The wife's entire social life does not have to be rebuilt from scratch, as her husband's rank helps to define her role and status immediately. In addition, one base is much like another, so that perceived change and differences between locations are minimal and easily accommodated. Military transfers may also be less stressful in that they are more predictable than corporate moves. For example, family members may know that they are assigned to a given location for exactly two years, and can then expect to move again, Repeated moving may also develop families who learn to adapt easily to new settings, so that subsequent moves are easier still. Families unable to adapt may select out of military careers at an early stage.

The mixed blessing of transfer is further confirmed by the results of interviews of married military personnel conducted by Woelfel and Savell (1978). Permanent change of station (PCS) moves, transfers in which the family is relocated with the military individual, were listed by the respondents as being both beneficial and disruptive to family life. Although the participants believed PCS moves provided them the opportunity to see new places and meet new people, the researchers noted that such moves were also regarded as a liability in that disruption was caused to the spouse and children by frequent uprooting and moving to new locations. In these instances, the military family experiences many of the transfer problems the corporate family experiences -- feelings of loneliness, loss of companionship, social isolation, etc.

Military transfers can be especially difficult for the family when they involve a separation for extended periods of time. Temporary transfers or unaccompanied tours can separate the military individual from his/her family for as much as one year. This practice usually does not afford the family and the military employee much or any visitation, as the military employee is either overseas or on a ship and thus inaccessible. In Woelfel and Savell's interviews, they found that family separation resulting from transfers was the second most frequently cited cause of family problems, with 50.0% of the respondents believing it to be detrimental to family harmony and only 0.9% regarding it as beneficial.

Most research regarding military family adaptation to separation has dealt with families enduring unusually long separations such as long war-time separations and POW/MIA separations. These are clearly extreme cases, in that any "usual" problems of separation are compounded by worry and uncertainty as to the whereabouts, safety, and future of the absent spouse. McCubbin, Hunter, and Dahl (1975) identified specific problems wives of POW/MIAs experienced during the separation. Several researchers (Bey and Lange, 1974; Hall and Simmons, 1973; Montalvo, 1976) have identified emotional difficulties which wives undergo during military separations -- depression, social isolation due to loss of friends and affiliation, loneliness, and resentment towards husband's career. K.B. Decker (1978) conducted a survey of 108 navy wives presently in separation situations, and found that loneliness and loss of companionship were the two most frequently cited (93% and 94% respectively) problems experienced by the wives. Because of the demands of their careers, military husbands/fathers often miss special events such as births of children, holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays. It is during these times the wives experienced the greatest amount of loneliness as well as the strongest resentment towards their husbands' careers and organization.

Separations can also create problems for children. The most frequently mentioned problems and concerns in Becher's study regarding children were related to children's behavior. The mothers reported that aggressive behavior toward siblings and peers, resentment of the father's absence, and excessive crying and sadness were the most frequent problems in children during periods of family separation. Identity problems were also common when fathers were absent.

Summary. While both corporate and military transfer situations will present similar problems and reactions in families, military families are subjected to some conditions and circumstances not as common to the corporate family transfer experience. The predominant differences between the two situations are that military transfers 1) are very frequent, and 2) may involve separation of the employee from his/her family. There has been a reasonable amount of research on the latter topic -- separation. However, there has been relatively little study of PCS moves. This would be a fruitful area for study, both because these moves at least partly resemble corporate moves, and because military settings can provide large samples of individuals who have experienced quite frequent relocation.

Conclusion - Is Transfer Harmful to Families?

While many authors write that transfer, especially frequent transfer, has harmful effects on families (c.f. Seidenberg, 1973; Tiger, 1978), Brett and Werbel (1980) found no discernible differences between mobile and non-mobile families when self-concept, mental and physical health, and attitudes toward life were compared. The researchers do contend that initially the family undergoes an adjustment period -- a period when they must learn "routines" such as learning the way around town, making friends, organizing the new house, enrolling the children in schools, etc. Much of the burden of these tasks falls on the wife, as the husband is often preoccupied with learning his new job (Foster and Liebranz, 1977). While Brett and Werbel offer evidence that this adjustment period has no real long-term distressing effect on the family, other researchers (Seidenberg, 1973; Vandervelde, 1979; Tiger, 1978) assert (primarily through case studies) that this is merely the first phase of what may be very serious and lasting adjustment problems. Whether transfers have a consistently negative impact on families or whether they are easily coped with by most families and noticeably difficult (substantial enough to produce a case history) for only a few is an issue that needs empirical confrontation in research.

Conclusion - What We Know and Do Not Know About Transfer

It is easier to enumerate what we do not know about how transfer affects employees and their families than what we do know. However, we shall make an effort. The following list contains only "facts" tested and supported in at least two studies. First, we do know that transfers tend to be more successful and satisfying when both spouses are involved in the decision to accept the transfer. Time allowed to prepare for and actually make the move is also important -- very sudden moves are more difficult to make. That lateral transfers are less attractive and less satisfying than promotional transfers to employees and their families has been confirmed in several studies. We also know that the criteria used to select domestic employees are often less effective in selecting successful expatriates, though we do not know for sure what predictors might be more valid. Many articles agree that there is a high failure rate, and a high cost associated with failure among expatriates. This suggests that selection research in this area could have great utility. Finally, we know that transfer can have severe and long-lasting negative effects on uprooted families. We also know that some families adjust to transfers with very little difficulty. We do not yet know how prevalent each of these two very different reactions is.

The list of things we do not know about transfer is long. Our ignorance is due to an inadequate amount of research, very poor quality research, and no efforts to replicate findings across different types of samples. First, we know very little about how employees decide whether or not to accept a transfer. Effort should be directed toward locating the dimensions of jobs and communities which employees consider in their decisions. Pinder (1977) has made a start in this direction, identifying city size as an important dimension. Second, we know virtually nothing about how employees learn and adjust to their new jobs following transfer. We do not know whether numbe and type of "boundaries" crossed or the organization's "socialization strategies" (formal vs. informal, individual vs. collective, serial vs. disjunctive) have effects on the ease of adjustment to the job following transfer. We do not know for sure what effects frequency of transfer may have on family well-being, willingness to move again, employee organizational commitment, communication networks, and organizational decision strategies, though past research points to these as interesting variables.

A theoretically interesting question which remains unanswered concerns the relationship of past job and community satisfaction to new job and community satisfaction. Rationales can be built for either direct or inverse relationships. In addition, the causes of employee and family failures to adjust to both domestic and foreign transfers are poorly understood, yet clearly important enough to warrant further investigation.

Considering the magnitude and importance of female participation in the labor force, it is surprising and disappointing that we know so little about the effects of one spouse's employment on the movability of the other. In this area, organizations are moving faster than researchers. Most organizations have become very sensitive to this issue, and some are hiring both spouses or providing job hunting aid for transferred spouses.

Research Critique and Recommendations

One major short coming of past research is that there simply has not been enough of it. A fair number of articles have been written about transfer, most of them entirely without benefit of data. Of the empirical studies reported in the literature, only one is of good quality. Brett and Werbel (1980) were the only researchers to employ a longitudinal design which included a measurement prior to the transfer and also utilized a comparison group of employees who had not moved recently. Other studies have been largely cross-sectional and retrospective in design. The flaws in this type of research are obvious. Also, many studies are plagued by potentially severe response-response problems, one item scales, and small sample sizes. In short, the research has ranged from non-existent to awful, with one noteworthy exception. In the absence of good empirical work, case histories, particularly of spouse maladjustment, have flourished. As stated above, these tales of woe may represent only the worst few percent of all transfer experiences, or may be quite common. Large sample studies will be necessary to determine the true extent of this problem.

Suggestions for future research include greater use of longitudinal designs, the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, and the use of external or objective criteria when feasible. Past research has belonged mostly to the "let's go see what correlates" school of thought. In the future, researchers should select a portion of the phenomenon to study, then think carefully about what variables are theoretically important, what causal relationships ought logically to exist, and how to adequately test these relationships. Theory-guided research is needed if we are to learn anything meaningful about the complex phenomena of employee and family adjustment to transfer.

Footnotes

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[2] In this section of the paper, unless otherwise specified, we will assume that the husband is the spouse who is transferred, since virtually all the literature cited has looked at wife adjustment to the husband's transfer, rather than the reverse.

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